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# JESSAMY'S COURTSHIP

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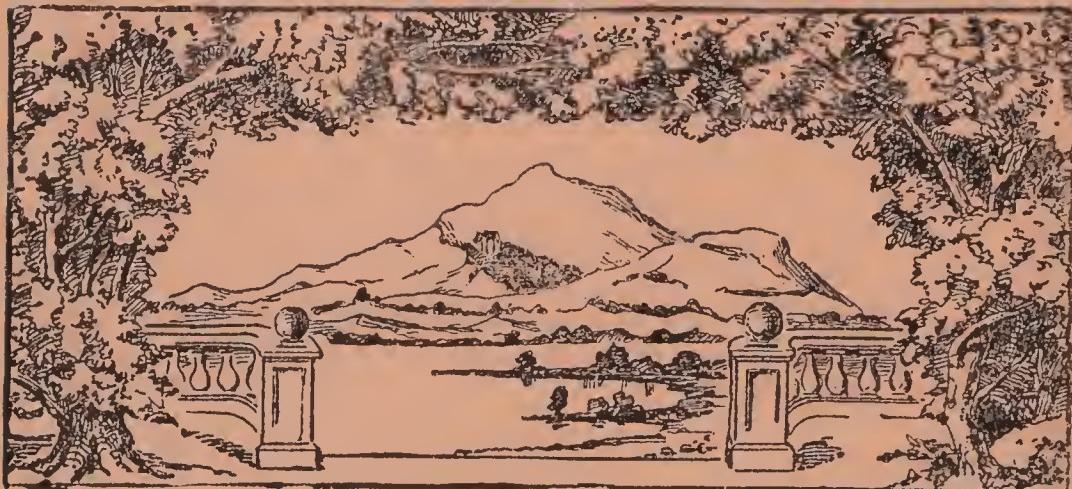
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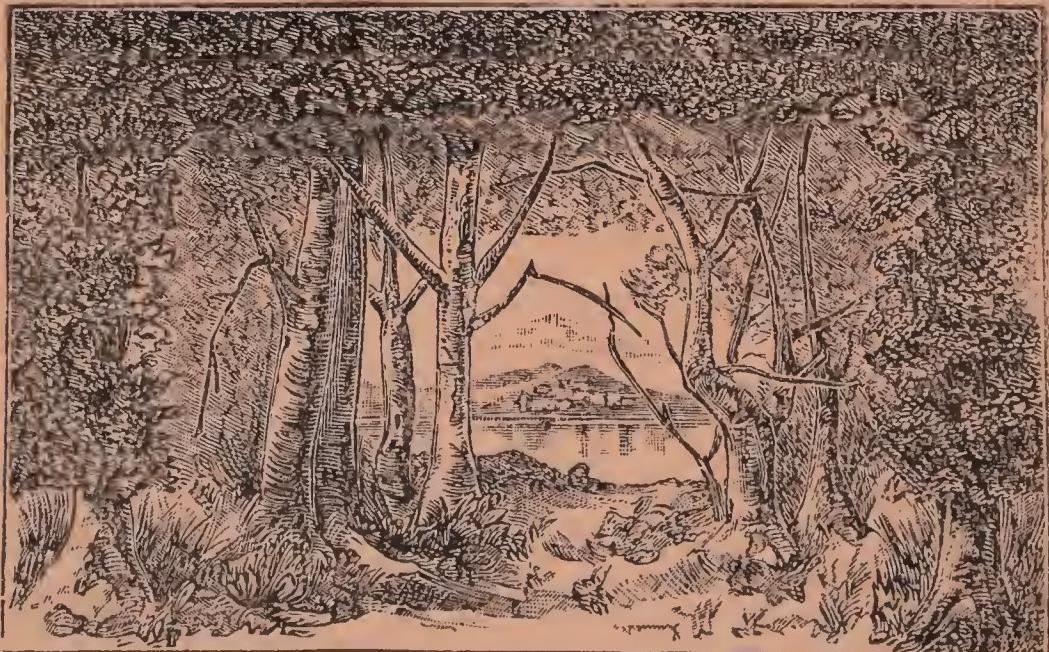
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# JESSAMY'S COURTSHIP:

An Original Farce,

IN ONE ACT,

BY

C. H. HAZLEWOOD.

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*First performed at the Philharmonic Theatre, March, 1875.*

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## Characters.

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Captain Firedrake (*An Old Naval Veteran*)....Mr. HUNTERSTON  
Mr. Adolphus Jessamy (*A Liner Traper and Haberdasher, courting the Captain's Niece on the sly*).....Mr. J. MURRAY and Mr. H. TAYLOR  
Araminta (*The Captain's Niece*).....Miss BLANCHE HAYS  
Perkins (*Her Maid*).....Miss DAVINE  
Miss Priscilla Firedrake (*The Captain's Maiden Sister, a Spinster of uncertain age*).....Miss EVERARD



00247987

## JESSAMY'S COURTSHIP.

SCENE.—*Interior of a villa at St. John's Wood; French windows, c. opening on a garden; doors, R. and L.; a fire-place, R. U. E., with fender, fire irons, rug, &c.; a sofa, L.; table, c., with table cover; carpet down.*

Enter ARAMINTA, the CAPTAIN's niece, followed by PERKINS, her maid, R. D.

ARA. How vexing! it's past the time when I was going to meet my dear Mr. Jessamy, and uncle has not yet left for the Admiralty as he said he intended to do.

PER. Perhaps he won't go at all, miss.

ARA. Oh, Perkins, how can you say that?

PER. Well, miss, you know how the wind of his mind chops and changes. Besides, you know your aunt, Miss Priscilla, is also in the house; and she always has the eye of a watchful dragon upon you.

ARA. Why, she said she was going out also.

PER. So she was, miss, till she received a letter from her unknown admirer; she has one every morning by the first post. I've found them on her dressing table after they've been read. They're all signed Strephon, and all so full of red-hot love that I wonder they don't set the paper alight.

ARA. Oh, it's somebody that must be hoaxing my poor old aunt.

PER. Poor old aunt, eh? Oh, miss, it's a good job she don't hear you; why, she thinks she's just in her prime!

ARA. Why, she's on the shady side of fifty!

PER. She's looking forward to the sunny side of matrimony for all that; she's told me so.

ARA. Absurd!

PER. She don't think so, and prides herself on her appearance. She puts a deal of confidence in me, and wants me to try and discover her unknown adorer.

ARA. But why don't he make himself known?

PER. That's the mystery, and Miss Priscilla likes it, for she considers it all the more romantic.

ARA. Oh, my poor, weak, silly aunt! some adventurer or fortune hunter is no doubt trying to make her his victim.

PER. (looking, L. D.) Hush, miss, here she comes. (they go  
to P)

Enter PRISCILLA, with open letter, L. D.

PRIS. (kissing letter) Another tender missive in the well-known hand that has already paid me so many graceful

compliments. (*reading letter*) "My whole heart is in this letter."

PER. (*aside*) Lor! how could he get it in the envelope?

PRIS. (*reading*) "For sixteen weeks I have ~~not~~ closed an eye."

PER. (*aside*) Oh, mustn't he be sleepy!

PRIS. (*reading*) "If you knew how often I've seen you in my dreams."

ARA. (*aside*) Why didn't he see her when he was awake, I wonder?

PRIS. "Some night I hope the day will come when the morn of our love will be disclosed."

PER. (*aside*) He must be an Irishman. (*to ARAMINTA*) I'll shew myself. (*comes down*) What! another of 'em, mum? (*points to letter*)

PRIS. (*with a slight scream; she conceals letter*) Oh, Perkins, how you frightened me! I thought it was my brother. I wouldn't let him know I had a lover for worlds.

PER. Why, he must think you're old enough to have one.

PRIS. My brother the Captain, as you may be aware, never had a wife.

PER. Well, you don't want a wife, but a husband.

PRIS. But the Captain would think some one had imposed on my maiden innocence.

PER. Well, miss—excuse me—but I think it's high time somebody did.

PRIS. (*indignantly*) Perkins!

ARA. (*coming down*) Oh, pray, aunt, don't be cross, for you know it's quite true!

PRIS. *What* is quite true, Araminta?

ARA. That you're getting somewhat into the sere and yellow leaf.

PRIS. (*indignantly*) Araminta! How dare you call me a yellow leaf.

ARA. It's only poetry, aunt.

PRIS. Only impudence, I think; go to your room, and, Perkins, you go to mine. I shall want you.

PER. Yes, miss.

(*Exit, L. D.*)

ARA. (*aside*) Whatever will become of Jessamy!

(*Exit, R. D.*)

PRIS. I'll make an effort, and disclose all to my brother. I am no longer a child, and my virgin heart longs for another sympathising heart to bear it company. O Strophon! my unknown adorer! soon may your loving form gladden these longing eyes, which look for you, and you alone.

CAPT. (*without, R. D.*) Good-bye, Araminta. I must be sheerling off.

PRIS. Ah! my brother; let me summon up my resolution that I may tell him all.

*Enter CAPTAIN FIREDRAKE in naval uniform, wearing sword, &c.*

CAPT. Oh, here you are, sister. I was wanting to see you that I might tell you that it would be uncertain as to whether I should be back to dine ; so don't wait for me. (*crosses to L.*)

PRIS. Brother, one moment. I've something to say to you.

CAPT. Be quick and pay out your lingo, then, or I shall be late for my appointment.

PRIS. Well, brother, you must know--ahem ! you must know--

CAPT. Well, if I *must* know, why *don't* I know ?

PRIS. I say—I was about to say—

CAPT. Then why the deuce don't you say, and not go tacking about in this way ?

PRIS. I feel I shall never be able to tell you.

CAPT. You do ? Oh, then, it's no good my stopping. (*going*)

PRIS. Stay, stay ! The effort must be made.

CAPT. Then why the deuce don't you make it ?

PRIS. Brother, I am no longer a child.

CAPT. Is that all you've to tell me ? Why, I've known that for the last forty-five years !

PRIS. (*sighing*) My time has at last come !

CAPT. What time ?

PRIS. I love—and am beloved !

CAPT. The deuce you are !

PRIS. Oh ! do not deem me rash.

CAPT. Rash ! I think you've been a precious long time going off the stocks.

PRIS. (*aside*) He is not displeased ! He will not oppose my union !

CAPT. Who is the lubber—the lover, I mean ?

PRIS. I must not tell him he is an anonymous person. (*aloud*) His name is Straphon.

CAPT. Stiff'un ?

PRIS. Straphon.

CAPT. And what business or profession is he ?

PRIS. What shall I say ? (*aloud*) Oh, he's an M.D.

CAPT. Oh, in the physic line ; and of good means and position, I suppose ?

PRIS. I can't tell you how respectable he is. (*aside*) Because I don't know.

CAPT. Well, Priscilla, I'm glad you have struck your flag to some husband or other, for you were going to leeward ; but if the fellow is only courting you for your money, and don't mean all fair and above board, hang me if I don't scuttle his nob. But, there, there ; I'm talking to you as

though you were as green as my niece Araminta, instead of which you're nearly as tough an old veteran as myself.

PRIS. Brother!

CAPT. Well, that don't matter, so as you both sail in convoy together, for there's many a good tune played on an old fiddle.

PRIS. Again!

CAPT. There, there! I must ask pardon again. You know I'm a rough-spun old tar, and what I say I mean. Mind your lover sails on the same tack.

PRIS. Leave that to me.

CAPT. Yes, I think you know how to steer your course. When am I to be introduced to him?

PRIS. (*aside*) What shall I tell him? (*aloud*) Oh, perhaps to-day.

CAPT. That's all right. I shall be proud to welcome my sister's future husband. Well, good-bye; I must make all sail. (*going, L. D., aside*) Only to think of old sister Priscilla going off the stocks so suddenly. (*Exit, L. D.*)

PRIS. I've broken the ice to my brother and the first step's gained.

*Enter ARAMINTA, R. D.*

ARA. Has uncle gone, aunt?

PRIS. Yes, he has just left me, and I have told him all.

ARA. All what?

PRIS. The story of my love.

ARA. But you say you've never seen the gentleman.

PRIS. But I expect to do so. When you're *my* age, my dear, I hope *you'll* have an admirer.

ARA. (*aside*) I've had one for a very long time if she only knew.

*Enter PERKINS, L. D.*

PER. (*to PRISCILLA*) Did you call me, mum?

PRIS. No, but I was just about to do so. Go to my room and wait for me. I'm about to dress and go out.

PER. Yes, miss. (*aside*) Is she going to buy the wedding dress already, I wonder? (*Exit, L. D.*)

PRIS. Araminta, I suppose you'll not be alarmed at being left in the house by yourself?

ARA. Oh, not at all. Perkins will be with me, you know.

PRIS. I shall be back as soon as I can. (*Exit, L. D.*)

ARA. Oh, pray don't hurry yourself, my dear aunt. Alone at last. Uncle is sure to be detained at the Admiralty some time, and if Aunt Priscilla once gets inside a mi'ine's shop she never knows when to leave it. Now for my dear Adolphus. (*goes up to window and calls*) Mr. Jessamy! Mr. Jessamy! You can venture in.

Enter JESSAMY at French window at back, c.

JES. What ! is the coast clear ?

ARA. Yes, there's nobody in the house now but you and I and Perkins.

JES. Oh, I am glad to hear that, for as I was hidden in the shrubbery I heard the sound of your uncle's voice. What a blustering tone he speaks in.

ARA. He's a most dreadful, violent man when provoked ; that's the reason I don't want him to see you until all has been explained, for he might take your life !

JES. For gracious sake don't say that, for it's the only one I've got.

ARA. You must break the ice gently to him.

JES. But suppose he breaks my neck gently !

ARA. Mr. Jessamy ! surely you don't mind incurring a little danger on my account.

JES. Oh, not at all, not a *little*.

ARA. I hope you're not a coward.

JES. A coward ! I'm in the Rifle Volunteers. I'm taken for one of the regulars. (*aside*) The boys call me a *regular guy*, but that's neither here nor there.

ARA. And have you got all the day to yourself ?

JES. Every remnant of it.

ARA. I wish we could go out together for a walk in the park, but uncle might return and miss me, and then he'd be furious.

JES. I shouldn't like to see him furious since he's the violent man you say he is ; but surely he'll agree to your being married some time ?

ARA. Yes, when I'm Aunt Priscilla's age, I suppose, about fifty-two or three.

JES. Fifty-two or three ! Why, I hope to see you a great-grandmother by that time.

ARA. Lor, Adolphus, how you talk !

JES. What's a draper unless he can ? his wits, like his yard measure, must always be at his fingers' ends. "Mr. Jessamy," said a lady to me the other day, "you said this dress would wash, but it *won't* ; it's completely faded and spoilt." "My dear madam," said I, "it's true I said the dress would *wash*, but I didn't say it would *keep its colour*." Ha ! ha ! good, wasn't it ?

ARA. Not for the customer. Oh, Adolphus ! I didn't think you were such a deceiver.

JES. Not to you, my Araminta, for during the many times I've served you at my shop I never shaved you once in all my life, and always knocked the farthings off on every article.

ARA. I always thought you looked at me very strangely.

JES. The first time I saw you your eyes went through me till I felt like a piece of shot silk !

ARA. I touched your feelings, then ?

JES. Touched my feelings ! Every look you gave me went like a pin into a pincushion, and penetrated to the very sawdust of my heart !

ARA. (*aside*) The dear fellow !

JES. I felt, as I may say, for the moment completely sold off ; but when you paid your bill, and took a ball of white cotton instead of a farthing for your change, my heart was stocked again with hope and re-opened on these premises (*touching his breast*) with the expectation of meeting with your future favours.

ARA. And so you shall, my dear Adolphus, but I'm afraid you'll have a dreadful task to obtain my uncle's consent.

JES. Must it be obtained ? can't we fly, in a fly ?

ARA. Do you mean an elopement ?

JES. I do, and when the marriage knot was tied as tight as a skein of thread we'd return, and falling at his feet promise never do it again as long as ever we lived.

ARA. Oh, Adolphus, you'd never leave the spot alive—your life would be nothing to him.

JES. Wouldn't it ? Well, it's something to me ; it will be better, then, to keep all from him.

ARA. Do you wish to live ?

JES. Well, I didn't come here to die.

ARA. Then at present we must love in secret, and trust to fate.

JES. I don't like giving trust. I'd rather sell a shilling article at elevenpence three-farthings than do it.

ARA. Besides I've an idea my uncle has promised me to another, as I think I've told you.

JES. Never shall you be his ! With my own scissors would I take the very last remnant of my life, and beneath my own counter would I find a grave.

ARA. Oh, pray, Adolphus, don't talk so dreadfully. Hear me swear that if I am not yours, never—never—never—will I be another's.

JES. Oh, Araminta, you elevate my spirits five per cent. above cost price.

*Enter PERKINS hastily, L. D.*

PER. The enemy ! the enemy !

ARA. Which ? My uncle or my aunt ?

PER. Both, I'm afraid. (*to JESSAMY*) Oh, go, sir, go !

JES. But where am I to go ?

PER. Back into the garden.

ARA. Yes, do, Adolphus ! Quick ! Go up a tree !

JES. But I may be perched there for hours !

PER. Don't fear, sir ; in an hour or two all will be well.

JES. But in an hour or two I should be ill. Do you think I could keep on my perch all that time ?

PRIS. (*without, L. D.*) Perkins !

PER. There she is ! Coming, mum, coming ! (*Exit, L. D.*)

ARA. Oh, fly, Adolphus, fly ! (*Exit, R. D.*)

JES. Fly ! I only wish I could ; I'd soon be behind my counter again. (*going up to garden, starts*) Ah ! what do I see ? Here's the terrible Captain entering at the garden gate (*goes to L. D. and opens it*), and here comes that old maid. Miss Priscilla ! If she sees me she'll scream murder and alarm the house. What shall I do ? Where shall I go ? There is but one place—under the table. (*hides under the table, the cover of which conceals him*)

*Enter PRISCILLA, R. D.*

PRIS. I've completed my purchases, provided myself with the wedding dress, the bridal wreath, and all besides, so that nothing shall be wanting should Straphon propose suddenly. Heigho ! (*sits at table*) I feel that a momentous period in my existence is approaching.

JESSAMY looks up from under table and sees her ; exclaims  
"Oh Lor !" and hides again.

PRIS. Who spoke ? (*looks towards L. D.*) Come in ; is it you, Perkins ? (*rises, looking towards L. D.* ; JESSAMY comes out and seizes her hand)

JES. Silence, my dear madam ; would you ruin me ?

PRIS. (*screams*) Ah !—a man ! what do you want here ?

JES. (*aside*) This must be the old maid—Aunt Priscilla.

PRIS. What do you want here, I say ?

JES. You !—you, my angelic—

PRIS. Who are you, sir ?

JES. Is it possible you cannot guess ?

PRIS. (*starting*) Ah !—then you are he !

JES. Oh yes, I'm a he ; that's all right.

PRIS. And the mysterious correspondent—the unknown adorer—the Straphon !

JES. (*aside*) The Stiff'un !—what does she mean ?

PRIS. Oh, why did you not arrive before ?

JES. Well, I didn't arrive before—because—because I didn't come !

PRIS. Have you seen my brother, the Captain ?

JES. No, dearest ! to see you is enough. (*aside*) More than enough.

PRIS. I knew it would not be long before we met, so acting on that impulse I have bought the wedding dress and

bridal wreath. Take me ! take me, Strephon ! I am all your own ! (*falling on his shoulder*)

*Enter PERKINS, L. D., starting amazed.*

PER. (*aside*) Oh, what do I see ! (*crosses behind to R. D.*) Come here, miss, come here ! (*calling in R. D.*) Enter ARAMINTA) Look there, miss, look there ! (*pointing to JESSAMY and PRISCILLA*)

ARA. Oh, support me ! (*leans on PERKINS*)

PRIS. I expect my brother here every moment.

JES. I'll run and meet him. (*going towards L. D.; she pulls him back*)

PRIS. Oh, no, no, I cannot spare you from my sight a single moment.

PER. (*aside to ARAMINTA*) Do you hear that, miss ?

ARA. Oh, I shall faint away upon the spot.

JES. But the ring—the bridal ring ! let me at least go and buy that.

ARA. (*aside to PERKINS*) He means it, Perkins.

PER. (*aside*) The crocodile !

PRIS. No, you shall not leave me until you have seen my brother ; by this time he has returned and I'll introduce to him my intended husband. (*Exit, L. D.*)

JES. And I'll introduce myself to the outside of the house as soon as possible.

*Going up stage is met by ARAMINTA and PERKINS, who come down one on each side of him, ARAMINTA, R., PERKINS, L.*

ARA. (*seizing and shaking him*) Oh, you traitor !

PER. (*seizing and shaking him*) Oh, you deluder !

ARA. You wicked, bad man !

PER. You entrapp'r of ancient virgins !

ARA. It's her money you want—didn't you say you'd go and buy the ring ? Oh, I can bear no more. (*falls on his shoulder with same business*)

PER. (*falls on his other shoulder with same business*) No more can I. Oh ! oh ! oh !

JES. Araminta, Perkins, I've more stock than I can bear ! Compose yourself—Araminta. (*she screams*) Be more yourself, Perkins. (*she screams*)

CAPT. (*without, c.*) What the devil is all that caterwauling in my house ?

ARA. My uncle ! (*runs off, R. D.*)

PER. My master ! (*runs off after her, R. D.*)

JES. I heard old Firedrake's voice ! I wonder which way he's coming—I'm off this way and chance it. (*goes up hastily, c., and runs against CAPTAIN, who enters from garden*)

CAPT. Where the devil are you coming?

JES. I'm not coming—I'm going. Good bye.

*Going, c. CAPTAIN pulls him back.*

CAPT. Belay, belay—I must know a little more of you first.

JES. (*aside*) I'll try it on with him. (*aloud, mysteriously*) It's all right—I'm the stiff 'un!

CAPT. The what?

JES. The stiff 'un!

CAPT. I don't care whether you're stiff or limp—I must have an explanation.

JES. I'll send you one by post. (*going up. CAPTAIN brings him down*)

CAPT. No, no, sir, here on this spot. It strikes me you're a robber—a housebreaker.

JES. No, sir, I'm a respectable linen draper.

CAPT. Ha! a rascally tally-man—come to impose upon some of the servants.

JES. No, sir, I repudiate the appellation ; my business is well known to all.

CAPT. To all the police, no doubt.

JES. But, as I said before, I'm going. (*going up. CAPTAIN draws his sword and stands before him*)

CAPT. And as I said before, you're not.

JES. (*aside, trembling*) Oh Lor, my life will be disposed of at less than cost price.

CAPT. For the last time, what brought you here?

JES. (*aside*) I see but one way out of it. (*aloud*) Well, sir, if you must know, I am the lover of your sister.

CAPT. What! of old Priscilla! Ho! ho! ho! that's a good 'un!

JES. (*aside*) It rather tickles him. (*aloud*) You don't know how I love her. (*aside*) And I'm sure I don't.

CAPT. (*taking his hand and wringing it violently*) Your hand, my boy. I congratulate you—I say I congratulate you.

JES. (*trying to disengage his hand*) Yes, yes, I know you do.

CAPT. Once more, I congratulate you. (*wringing his hand*)

JES. No, no, that's quite enough. (*releases his hand*)

CAPT. Well, when is it to be?

JES. Oh, at once. I'm going to buy the licence. (*going up. CAPTAIN pulls him back*)

CAPT. Belay, belay ; I must be sure and sartain that what you've been telling me is true, for my sister has been taken in too often, but this time she shall make sure of her man. I'll not lose sight of you till the marriage ceremony is completed.

JES. Exactly, but I must fetch the ring. (*going up*.  
 CAPTAIN *brings him back*)

CAPT. Hold on ; any time will do for that.

JES. (*aside*) He'll make me marry the wrong woman as sure as I'm a linen draper.

CAPT. (*brings down two chairs, R. and L. of table*) Sit down.

JES. No, thank you, I—

CAPT. (*pushes him down in chair, L., sits opposite, R.*) Sit down. Now, then, what are your prospects, Mr. Stiff'un ?

JES. Oh, my prospects—splendid ! corner shop, looks both ways ; commanding premises, where I sell off every three months at an alarming sacrifice. I'll go and fetch you one of my bills. (*rises*)

CAPT. (*forces him down again*) Sit down ; let's come to business.

JES. I'm always open to business, and should like to do some with you. (*touches the front of CAPTAIN's shirt*) I can serve you with shirts like these at four-and-eleven.

CAPT. (*aside*) Confound his impudence!

JES. I'll go and fetch you a specimen. (*going. CAPTAIN rises and forces him down in chair*)

CAPT. Sit down. (*aside*) I don't much like the idea of having a linen draper for a brother-in-law, but Priscilla has been such a long time on the stocks that I shall be glad to see her go off at any price. Phew ! this has quite excited me. (*takes out white pocket handkerchief and wipes his forehead with it*)

JES. (*takes pocket handkerchief from CAPTAIN and examines it*) I can do you these at six three farthings.

CAPT. (*snatches handkerchief back*) What the deuce do you mean, sir ? This is cambric.

JES. I declare to you mine are quite as good ; one trial is all I ask. (*rises and is going up. CAPTAIN forces him down in chair*)

CAPT. Sit down ; to business, I say.

JES. That's what I say, only you won't let me do any business with you.

CAPT. After your marriage, my boy ; but mind, I shouldn't like my sister to serve in your shop.

JES. (*aside*) Nor I, for she'd drive every blessed customer out of it.

CAPT. You, I fancy, are a trifle under Priscilla's age.

JES. Yes, a trifle of twenty years or so.

CAPT. Indeed !

JES. I'll go and fetch you the certificate of my birth.

(*starts up. CAPTAIN forces him down*)

CAPT. Sit down. (*takes chair up*)

JES. I'm tied to the stake, and shall be sacrificed as a victim at the altar of Hymen.

CAPT. (*calls towards L. D.*) Priscilla ! Priscilla !

JES. I'll go and fetch her. (*as he is about to cross to L. D.*  
CAPTAIN forces him down in his seat)

CAPT. Sit down. I'll bring her here, and pen, ink, and paper at the same time, for I've seen so many lovers jilt Priscilla when they've found Priscilla's fortune has not been what they expected that I'll have your promise to marry her in writing, so that will keep you to your word in one way, and my sword (*half drawing it*) shall keep you to it in another.

(*Exit, L. D.*)

JES. Here's an opportunity—I'm off! (*going up, c., in haste.* PERKINS and ARAMINTA run on, R. D., and secure him)

PER. No, you're not—hold him tight, miss. (*they bring him down*)

ARA. Oh, you vile man, would you abandon me ?

JES. What can I do ? I must be either spliced or sliced.

ARA. Surely you'd never marry my aunt ?

JES. Never, if I knew how to get out of it.

PER. Have a duel with the Captain, sir, and even if you should happen to get shot a little it won't hurt you much.

JES. Why, I might lose the very last remnant of my life ! Oh, Araminta, if you've the least selvage of love left for me do hide me somewhere—anywhere !

ARA. But where ?

JES. I'm not particular—put me in your bed, and let Perkins come and tuck me up.

ARA. Oh, horrible idea !

CAPT. (*without*) Come along, Priscilla.

ARA. Ah ! my uncle ! be firm—be firm.

(*Exeunt ARAMINTA and PERKINS, r.*)

JES. Firm ! I feel melting away like a lump of butter on a round of hot toast !

*Enter CAPTAIN, with pen, ink, paper, and pair of pistols under his arm, which he places on table.* PRISCILLA enters.

PRIS. (*to JESSAMY*) Oh, my Strophon, all will soon be settled !

JES. (*aside*) I know I shall soon be.

CAPT. (*forces him down in chair, L. of table*) Sit down

PRIS. (*on CAPTAIN'S R., in R. C.*) Be composed, my dear Strophon. (*to JESSAMY*)

JES. How can I be composed when he keeps pushing me up and down like a Jack in a box !

ARAMINTA and PERKINS look on, R.

CAPT. (*placing writing paper before JESSAMY, and handing him pen*) Now, Mr. Stiff'un, your written promise to marry my sister at once.

JES. Captain Firedrake, I may as well tell you at once that I'm no Stiff'un !

PRIS. (to CAPTAIN) Strephon, brother, Strephon.

CAPT. Well, Strephon, then, write, if you please.

*JESSAMY looks across to R. D., and sees ARAMINTA and PERKINS threatening him in action as much as to dare him to do it.*

JES. (dropping pen) Oh ! oh ! the cramp in my fingers !

CAPT. The cramp ! Oh, it's non-circulation of the blood. I'll soon set it going. (goes to him, takes JESSAMY's hand in his left hand and bangs it violently with his right)

JES. (bawling aloud in pain) Oh ! oh, Captain ! Captain, you're flattening me.

CAPT. That's just the way I serve my own fin when it's cramped.

JES. Serve yourself as often as you like, but I want no more of your custom.

CAPT. (motions him to write) Come, go to wind, go to wind.

PRIS. Yes, do, Mr. Strephon.

*As JESSAMY is about to write he crosses over to R. and sees ARAMINTA and PERKINS again threatening him ; he pauses and lays down the pen. CAPTAIN about to take his hand. JESSAMY puts his hand behind him.*

CAPT. (violently) Will you write, sir ?

JES. (throwing down pen and coming down) No, I won't. (resolutely)

CAPT. } What !  
PRIS. }

JES. One word for all. I don't cotton to Miss Priscilla at all.

PRIS. (with a scream) Ah !

CAPT. What ! you won't marry my sister ?

JES. Marry your grandmother !

CAPT. (takes up pistols and offers them) Then you know your alternative. You must meet me yard arm to yard arm.

JES. Not I. Yard measure to yard measure, if you like.

PRIS. Oh, my nuptial hopes ! are you once more blighted ? Oh ! I can bear no more ! I'm going !—I'm going !—I'm gone ! (faints in CAPTAIN's arms, who puts pistols on table and supports her, she screaming hysterically)

CAPT. (to JESSAMY) You shall pay for your freak, sir ; only wait till I've taken this poor blighted flower to her room ; there's no escape for you. I'll have the house surrounded. (looks towards L. D.) Perkins ! Perkins ! (PERKINS and ARAMINTA run off, R. D., Be calm, Priscilla, my dear, be calm. (he bears her off, L. D. she screaming hysterically),

JES. There won't be an inch of my life left. I'm wound up

like a reel of cotton, and that old buccaneer of a Captain will blow me into shreds and patches.

*Enter ARAMINTA and PERKINS, R. D.*

ARA. Oh, Adolphus ! what is to be done ?

JES. Why, I'm to be done, of course ; soon will you see this carpet stained with my crimson gore.

ARA. But the garden--cannot you escape by that way ? Go and look, Perkins. (*PERKINS goes up and looks out at back*)

JES. Didn't you hear him say he'd have the place surrounded ?

PER. Oh, miss, there's John and Thomas both holding the bull dog by the collar ready to fly at any one who crosses the garden.

JES. There ! there ! I told you so.

CAPT. (*without, L. D.*) Guard every door ; don't let a creature out !

JES. You hear ! you hear !

ARA. He comes, and I dare not stay another moment. Oh, Adolphus, all I can do is to pray for your safety !

PER. Quick, miss, quick ! (*they run off, R. D.*)

JES. If I stay here to be shot at, I'm a Dutchman ! but how to elude him—where to hide ? If I got under the table again I should soon be discovered. (*looks around and sees fire place*) Ah, there is but one resource—the chimney—he'll never think of looking there, so up I go. (*goes up chimney*)

*Enter CAPTAIN, L. D.*

CAPT. (*takes pistols up from table*) Now, sir—what, gone ! But where ? ah ! there is but one place in which he could have concealed himself. (*going to R. D.*) Come out, sir, come out !

*Enter ARAMINTA and PERKINS, L.*

ARA. Oh, uncle, whatever is the matter ?

CAPT. (*going, R. D.*) Come out, sir, come out ! (*Exit in room, R. D., and immediately returns*) Why, he's escaped !

PER. (*aside*) Wherever can he have gone to ?

CAPT. (*looks under table*) Where can he be ? I'm regularly capsized. Are you certain you've not hidden him anywhere ? (*to ARAMINTA*)

ARA. I declare to you I've not. But pray put down those dreadful pistols—suppose they should go off by accident.

CAPT. There's no danger, they're only loaded with blank cartridge. I merely brought them to frighten the lubber, but I don't want to frighten you, so I'll discharge them up the chimney. (*goes to fire-place and fires pistols up chimney. JESSAMY is heard to cry out, "Oh ! oh ! oh !" and drops down chimney covered with soot*)

ARA. Adolphus !

CAPT. Mr. Stiff'un !

JES. (*coming down*) I'm killed, I know I am !

ARA. No, Adolphus, no, the pistols were not loaded.

CAPT. Hallo ! do you know this lubber ?

ARA. Yes, uncle. I blush to say it was to see me he came here, not Aunt Priscilla.

CAPT. Oh, you young hussey !

*Enter PRISCILLA joyfully, L. D., with letter.*

PRIS. Give me joy, brother, give me joy : there has been some mistake. That gentleman is not Strephon at all. I have here a letter from the true Strephon in his own name—he is no other than your old shipmate, Lieutenant Cruiser, that you wanted me to marry years ago.

CAPT. And you wouldn't.

PRIS. But now I will—I've taken second thoughts.

CAPT. You'd better if you want a first husband. But (*to ARAMINTA*) as for your affair, I wash my hands of it.

JES. You'd better let me wash *my* hands, and then place them in those of your niece.

CAPT. Suppose I say I refuse my consent ?

ARA. Why, then, uncle, when I'm of age, and come into my fortune, I shall marry him without it.

CAPT. Oh, you will, eh ?—well, that's cool ! Do you hear them, Priscilla ?

PRIS. My dear brother, as I shall soon become a blushing bride—for the Lieutenant says here (*pointing to letter*) that he shall arrive to-day—let our dear Araminta be married at the same time.

ARA. (*kneeling to CAPTAIN*) Oh, do !

JES. (*kneeling*) Oh, do !

PER. (*kneeling*) Oh, do !

PRIS. (*kneeling*) Oh, do !

CAPT. It's all a do, I think. (*aside*) Old Priscilla is going off the stocks, and that will make me agree almost to anything. (*to JESSAMY*) Come here, you lubber—come here, you baggage. (*joins their hands*) Sail in convoy for life, and may your voyage prove a smooth one.

ARA. Oh, Adolphus !

JES. Oh, Araminta ! (*kisses her, and blacks her face*) Our marriage lines shall soon appear in black and white.

PER. She's got the black already.

JES. (*to ARAMINTA*) Your devoted draper will be constant, kind, and steady. (*to AUDIENCE*) Customers, come and fill my shop. I'm about to take a partner for which you can't think less o' me. So pray extend your favours to Mr. and Mrs. Adolphus Jessamy.

CURTAIN.

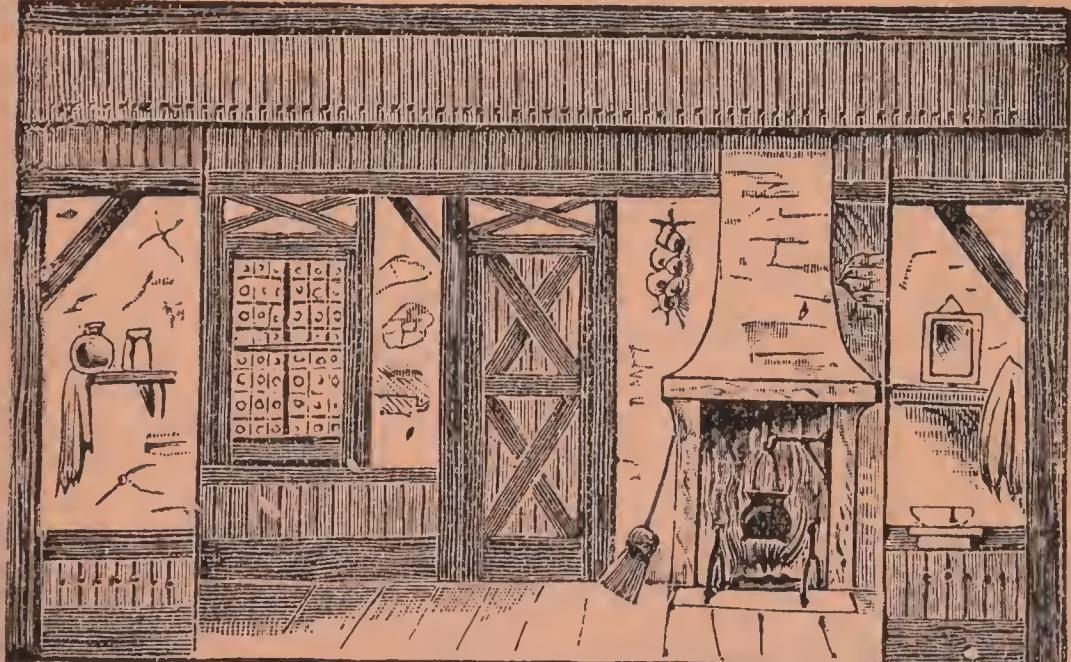
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